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ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 46/30, of 6 December 1991, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct further consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States, on the basis of the study undertaken by him in accordance with paragraph 8 of resolution 43/65 (A/45/435, annex), as well as the views and suggestions submitted by Member States in accordance with paragraph 9 of resolution 45/52 (A/46/291 and Add.1 and 2), taking into account the evolving situation in the region, to explore further the ways and means of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In paragraph 8 of the same resolution, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its forty-seventh session a report on the implementation of that resolution.

2. The present report is submitted in response to the request contained in paragraph 8 of the resolution.

II. ACTION TAKEN

3. In accordance with the request contained in paragraph 7 of resolution 46/30, the Secretary-General has undertaken a number of consultations with concerned parties within and outside the region to explore further the ways and means of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

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4. In the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in undertaking those consultations, to take into account, inter alia, the evolving situation in the region. In this connection, a constant point raised by all of those consulted was the importance of the present peace initiative on the Middle East, launched at Madrid in October 1991, which has since then commenced both its bilateral and multilateral tracks.

5. Indeed, it was the shared opinion that, in the light of these developments, it would be premature at this time for the Secretary-General to take any further action relating to the question of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The ongoing peace initiative on the Middle East offers a window of opportunity in the process of resolving the overall situation in the region. The Secretary-General earnestly hopes that the efforts of all those involved will be rewarded with positive results.

6. Furthermore, in his foreword to the study on effective and verifiable measures which would facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East (A/45/435), the Secretary-General noted that the establishment of the zone "should come eventually as a result of building sufficient confidence amongst the principal actors in the region at which point formal undertakings to that effect could be initiated". In this connection, the Secretary-General wishes to recall that the study discusses a number of steps and measures that could contribute to this process. As noted in the foreword, "they could be undertaken independently or in conjunction with each other, as well as by individual States or jointly by several, and also on a reciprocal basis. Each of them would move the States concerned closer to their ultimate objective - the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons" in the region of the Middle East.